

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Page 1, first paragraph under "Background of the Invention":

Devices for grasping free suture ends during surgical procedures are well known in the art. In one such device, an elongate element is provided. This element has a flexible, closed loop at one end. The elongate element is telescopically mounted inside a hollow shaft so that the loop can be alternately withdrawn into, or projected out of, the distal end of the shaft. In use, the device is manipulated so that the distal end of the shaft is brought into the ~~vacinity~~ vicinity of the free end of the suture which is to be grasped, the loop is projected out of the distal end of the shaft, the device is further manipulated until the free end of the suture extends through the loop, and then the loop is withdrawn back into the shaft so as to grasp the suture and hold it tight against the distal end of the shaft.

Page 7, fourth full paragraph:

Fig. 2 is a side elevational view, partially cut away and partially in section, showing the same tool, except that the rod is shown in its aforementioned ~~proximalmost~~ distalmost position;

Page 8, second full paragraph:

Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to Figs. 1 and 2, suture grasping tool 5 is shown which comprises a rigid, hollow shaft 10, a rod 12, a first elongate wire-like element 15, a second elongate wire-like element 20, and an actuation ~~device~~ means 25.

Page 8, last paragraph, continuing onto page 9:

Rod 12 is a solid element having a proximal end 55 and a distal end 60. Rod 12 is telescopically located in the proximal portion 35 of shaft 10. More specifically, rod 12 has a longitudinal length slightly greater than the longitudinal length of the proximal portion 35 of the shaft. Accordingly, rod 12 may be moved between (i) a proximalmost position wherein distal end 60 of rod 12 is spaced proximally from the point where the proximal and distal portions 35, 45 of the shaft meet (see Fig. 1); and (ii) a distalmost position wherein distal end 60 of rod 12

is substantially aligned with the point where the proximal and distal portions of the shaft meet (see Fig. 2).

Page 9, first full paragraph:

First and second wire-like elements 15 and 20 each have a proximal end 65, 70 and a distal end 75, 80, respectively (see Fig. 3). Proximal ends 65 and 70 of these wire-like elements are attached to distal end 60 (Fig. 1) of rod 12, whereby the wire-like elements 15 and 20 will move in conjunction with rod 12. In addition, at least the distal ~~portions~~ ends 75 and 80 of the respective wire-like elements 15 and 20 ~~normally~~ are biased to bend or flare away from each other. Furthermore, the first wire-like element 15 is bent radially inwardly immediately adjacent to its distal end 75 so as to form a substantially hook-shaped configuration, generally indicated at 85 (Fig. 3).

Page 10, first full paragraph:

~~Activation~~ Actuation means 25 (Figs. 1 and 2) is attached to proximal end 30 of shaft 10 and to proximal end 55 of rod 12. In the preferred embodiment, ~~activation~~ actuation means 25 includes a housing 90 attached to proximal end 30 of shaft 10. Housing 90

defines a cylindrical cavity 95 which is aligned with, and opens axially into, lumen 50 of shaft 10. A trigger 100 is pivotally attached to the housing and extends into the cylindrical cavity. A piston-like element 105 is attached to proximal end 55 of rod 12 and located in reciprocally sliding relation within the housing's cylindrical cavity 95. A spring 110 biases piston 105 proximally so that rod 12 will normally assume its aforementioned proximalmost position (Fig. ~~11~~ 1). Piston 105 may be moved distally against the force of spring 110 by trigger 100, so that rod 12 will assume its aforementioned distalmost position (Fig. 2).

Page 11, first full paragraph:

~~Device~~ Tool 5 may be used to grasp a piece of suture 115 at a surgical site (Figs. 3 and 4). Among other things, it may also be used to grasp a piece of suture 115 on the far side 118 of a piece of soft tissue 120 and to pass that suture back through the soft tissue.

Page 11, second full paragraph:

More particularly, in this case, pointed distal end 40 of ~~device~~ tool 5 is first forced through soft tissue 120. Then

distal end 40 of ~~device~~ tool 5 is maneuvered so as to bring the distal end up to a portion of the suture 115 which is to be carried back through soft tissue 120. Next, trigger 100 is activated so as to move rod 12 toward its distalmost position. This pushes distal ends 75 and 80 of wires 15 and 20 out distal end 40 of shaft 10 so that they flare away from each other (Fig. 3). Tool 5 may then be manipulated further as needed so that distal ends 75 and 80 of first and second wire-like elements 15 and 20 pass on either side of a length of target suture 115. It is to be appreciated that as any such further manipulation occurs, the flaring ends of the two wire-like elements 15 and 20 will form a natural trap for enveloping the length of target suture 115.

Page 12, first full paragraph:

Thereafter, the length of suture 115 may be released from ~~device~~ tool 5 by squeezing trigger 100 again, so that the two wire-like elements 15 and 20 project back out the distal end of the shaft, thereby allowing the length of suture to separate from the tool.